

The funeral procession began at 2 p.m. in Battery Park, then on to Chatham Street, to East Broadway and on to Grand. From there, participants marched through the Bowery to Union Park, around the Park, down Broadway and past the front of City Hall where the main orations took place, then ultimately returned to Battery Park. Above, an image of the carriage carrying the funeral urn, bedecked with signs of mourning and drawn by four white horses. *New York Herald*, June 25, 1845.

## Contested Mourning: The New York Battle over Andrew Jackson's Death

Matthew Warshauer

It was a sunny summer morning and already in the dawn hours lower Manhattan was bustling. Battery Park quickly filled with participants and spectators for the June 24, 1845, solemnities to commemorate the death of Andrew Jackson. Within hours the area was overflowing with citizens of all classes straining to see the procession slowly taking shape. Men clad in a dizzying array of military uniforms rushed to find their places. Young boys climbed trees to gain a better vantage point. Along the route where the procession was to pass, New York City's residents were making their way to the sidewalks, windows, and building tops. Everywhere, businesses and private residences displayed the traditional signs of mourning: black crape and pictures of the deceased abounded. All places of business were closed and literally thousands of flags in the city and on ships in the harbor fluttered at half-mast. The residents of Brooklyn and Staten Island were ferried over on additional boats so they too could take part in the grand ceremonies. One newspaper reported that the streets in Brooklyn were "virtually deserted."<sup>1</sup>

When the day's event ultimately commenced, newspapers reported that 40,000 people marched in the procession and ten times that number, some 400,000, paid respects while the nearly five-mile-long funeral train, in which dozens of military, civic, and private organizations marched, made its solemn way through the city's streets. Nor was New York alone in this outpouring of grief. From major cities throughout the nation—Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Boston, Richmond, Nashville—to smaller enclaves such as Pottsville, Pennsylvania, and Frederick, Maryland, cities and towns all over America engaged in

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1. All of these occurrences, including the weather, are amply described in the *New York Herald*, "The Grand Funeral Obsequies of General Jackson," 25 June 1845.

tributes. Citizens by the thousands flocked to the streets in order to pay their respects to Jackson and hear the nation's leading men deliver lofty eulogies and sermons. Even South Carolinians, with whom the ex-president had clashed so harshly during the Nullification crisis, lauded the general, announcing that "His name is identified with the glory of his country." Still, it was New York City that revealed the extent to which Americans could go in honoring the departed chieftain. The funeral commemoration was, perhaps, the largest in the nation's history up to that time, and certainly dwarfed anything that had previously occurred within the city. Nor was this the only commemoration in the state; at least seven other cities, large and small, held similar ceremonies.<sup>2</sup>

It may come as little surprise that Jackson's death was met with such an overwhelming response. Historians have done well in documenting the general's immense popularity following the Battle of New Orleans, his democratic inauguration, and the belief by many of the time that he represented the common man. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., entitled the era, "the Age of Jackson." Scholars, however, have written remarkably little concerning the general's demise and the climate that accompanied it. John William Ward, in *Andrew Jackson: Symbol For An Age*, utilized funeral orations given for Jackson to discuss Old Hickory's symbolism, yet Ward did not investigate America's actual commemorations, and he completely overlooked how the nature of party warfare during the Second American Party System was interwoven within Jackson's symbolic image.<sup>3</sup> Ward did note a few minor occurrences regarding New

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2. Ibid.; for a brief, but representative listing of formal commemorations, see B. M. Dusenbery, ed., *Monument to the Memory of General Andrew Jackson: Containing Twenty-five Eulogies and Sermons Delivered on Occasion of his Death* (Philadelphia: Walker and Gillis, 1846), 7; see also *New York Evening Post*, 6 June 1845; *Columbian Register* (New Haven, Conn.), 24 June 1845; "The Memory of Andrew Jackson," *Charleston Daily Courier*, 4 July 1845. More research is required to determine the full extent of the mourning, but even a cursory examination of newspapers from the period suggest that the larger cities had processions with upwards of 10,000 marchers.

3. John William Ward, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), argued that Jackson represented "Nature, Providence, and Will," all of which were key concepts in nineteenth-century America. Ward's presentation is correct when considering Democratic views of Jackson, but it must be reassessed when considering Whigs. Though they too described the general in terms of "Nature" and "Will," such traits were portrayed in negative terms. *The Norwich Courier* of Connecticut, for example, remarked that Jackson's "power, lay in the vehemence of impetuous nature—the energy of an indomitable will. This is what made his war-cry, whether in the Camp or the Cabinet, a signal for the onslaught of a mighty host of partizan adherents. . . ." See *The Norwich Courier*, 10 July 1845, Newspaper Collection, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Connecticut. Interestingly, Ward utilized funeral orations to construct his symbolic view. He did not,

York's reaction to Jackson's death, but the larger aspects of the commemoration, especially the partisanship, was missing.

The story of the Empire State's funeral ceremonies for Andrew Jackson provides a vivid and telling story about the degree to which Jackson remained a significant figure in antebellum America, and how the reigning political parties of the day attempted to utilize the dead general's image for partisan advantage. The timing of Jackson's death was critical because it corresponded with the maturation of a party system marked by a rampant and often mean-spirited partisan warfare between Democrats and Whigs.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, the various commemorations around the nation were party events every bit as significant as a campaign rally. As David Waldsteicher has recently argued, the "celebrations, oratory, and the printed discourse that surrounded them constituted the true political public sphere of the early Republic." Moreover, the degree of pomp and display mattered, for "if politics remained a matter of sympathy, of deep feeling, its public performance allowed insights into character. It infused individual and collective identity, ratifying personal worth in light of communal display."<sup>5</sup>

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apparently, look at Whig newspapers. For more on the Whig view of Jackson's "will," see Lawrence F. Kohl, *The Politics of Individualism: Parties and the American Character in the Jacksonian Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). For more on Jackson's Democratic image, see Michael J. Heale, *The Presidential Quest: Candidates and Images in American Political Culture, 1787–1852* (London: Longman, 1982); Andrew Burstein, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson* (New York: Knopf, 2003).

4. For more on the development and partisan warfare of the Second American Party System, see Richard P. McCormick, *The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973); Harry L. Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second American Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1981). John F. Marszalek noted, "the two-party system was born with a vengeance. . . . Party efforts revolved around electing candidates more than implementing ideology. Consequently, the era saw the birth of the politics of personality. Politicians attacked one another more than they battled over specific issues." Marszalek, *The Petticoat Affair: Manners, Mutiny, and Sex in Andrew Jackson's White House* (New York: Free Press, 1997); William E. Gienapp, "'Politics Seem to Enter into Everything': Political Culture in the North, 1840–1860," in Stephen E. Maizlish and John J. Kushma, eds., *Essays on American Antebellum Politics, 1840–1860* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982).

5. David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 293, 207; see also, Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). Significant involvement in politics contrasts the arguments of some recent historians. For questions of party participation, see Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, "Limits of Political Engagement in Antebellum America: A New Look at the Golden Age of Participatory Democracy," *Journal of American History* 84 (December 1997): 855–85; Harry L. Watson, "Humbug? Bah! Altschuler and Blumin and the Riddle of the Antebellum Electorate," *ibid.*, 886–93; Jean H. Baker, "Politics, Paradigms, and Public Culture," *ibid.*, 894–99; Norma Basch,

This last point, communal worth, is particularly striking concerning Jackson and modern historians. The seventh president has not fared well in recent histories. The very mention of his name raises images of Indian wars, the Trail of Tears, and slaveholding. Numerous books since the 1960s Civil Rights Era have emphasized such points.<sup>6</sup> The most recent biographical character study described Jackson as “the destroyer of Indian cultures” and “incapable of seeing the problems of Indian removal or African-American enslavement.”<sup>7</sup> Yet what is particularly striking about Jackson’s death is what did not appear in newspapers. Out of the literally hundreds of articles published in over fifty New York newspapers in June, July, and August of 1845, there was virtually no focus on Jackson’s Indian policy or his slaveholding. In fact, only one article made any mention of Indian issues, and that had to do with President Jackson’s alleged usurpation in defying the Supreme Court’s *Worcester v. Georgia* decision rather than the plight of Native Americans.<sup>8</sup>

The issue of Jackson as slaveholder garnered little more attention. One article marveled at how affected the Hermitage slaves were by his demise and noted that he must have been a good master; another criticized him as “a regular jobber in human flesh.” Two other pieces commented on the first article.<sup>9</sup> To some degree, historians’ focus on

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“A Challenge to the Story of Popular Politics,” *ibid.*, 900–03; Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, “Politics, Society, and the Narrative of American Democracy,” *ibid.*, 904–09; see also Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, *Rude Republic: Americans and their Politics in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); for an alternative view of party activity, see William E. Gienapp, “‘Politics Seem To Enter into Everything’: Political Culture in the North, 1840–1860,” in Maizlish and Kushma, eds., *Essays on American Antebellum Politics*, 14–70.

6. The following is merely a brief overview of such works: Michael Rogin, *Fathers & Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New York: Knopf, 1975); Robert Remini, *The Legacy of Andrew Jackson: Essays on Democracy, Indian Removal, and Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); Jeanne and David Heidler, *Old Hickory’s War: Andrew Jackson and the Quest for Empire* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1996); John Buchanan, *Jackson’s Way: Andrew Jackson and the People of the Western Waters* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2001); Robert Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars* (New York: Viking, 2001); One need only read the most recent work on Jackson to see an overall negative portrait, especially in regard to Indian issues: Andrew Burstein, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson*. For more on this point see Matthew Warshauer, “Review Essay on Andrew Burstein, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson*,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 63, no. 4: 366–72.

7. Burstein, *The Passions of Andrew Jackson*, 6, 231.

8. “Death of Gen. Jackson,” *New York Tribune*, 17 June 1845.

9. “General Jackson and His Slaves,” *Albany Evening Atlas*, 25 June 1845; for Jackson as “jobber in human flesh,” see “Gen. Jackson’s Fame,” *New York Tribune*, 19 June 1845; a Whig Party newspaper

such issues tells us more about our own predilections regarding race and culture than they do about the Age of Jackson's. Though the general is known today as the architect behind Indian removal, the people of his own era did not consider such issues at the time of his death. Rather, they argued about the same issues that they had when he was president: his iron will, the Bank veto, and the spoils system. Moreover, a large segment of the population flooded the streets and numerous organizations vied with one another to engage in a grand display of public mourning for the Hero of New Orleans. The New York funeral commemorations tell the story of Jackson's immense popularity in the mid-nineteenth century as well as his still important political symbolism.

Funeral ceremonies were certainly nothing new to New York City. Such a well-known man as Alexander Hamilton had been accorded a fitting remembrance after his deadly duel with Aaron Burr. So too were the American sailors who had lost their lives aboard the infamous British prison ships in New York Harbor. Indeed, many years after the fact, in 1808, New York held a commemoration for these sailors with some thirty thousand spectators in attendance.<sup>10</sup> Presidents too received fitting tributes at the hands of New Yorkers: George Washington in 1800, Thomas Jefferson in 1826, William Henry Harrison, the first president to die in office, in 1841. Yet none of these affairs matched the pomp and pageantry of the farewell to Andrew Jackson. Part of this was due to the sheer increase in the city's population. By 1845, New York was inhabited by some 371,000 residents, more than double just twenty years earlier.<sup>11</sup> Both Washington and Jefferson were accorded notable remembrances. Indeed, when Jackson died, many newspapers reported that he stood second only to the nation's first father in national

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mocked the story of Jackson's slaves, retorting, "we presume they would have felt less grief if their free papers had been presented to them on the occasion." See "Gen. Jackson and His Slaves," *Syracuse Journal*, in *Madison County Whig*, 9 July 1845; see also *ibid.*, 23 July 1845, for additional condemnation of Jackson for failing to emancipate his slaves. For more on Jackson as a slaveholder, see Matthew Warshauer, "Andrew Jackson: Slaveholder," forthcoming, *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*.

10. Thomas Fleming, *Duel: Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr and the Future of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 336–39; Robert E. Cray, Jr., "Commemorating the Prison Ship Dead: Revolutionary Memory and the Politics of Sepulture in the Early Republic, 1776–1808," *William and Mary Quarterly* 56 (July 1999): 565–90.

11. Amy Bridges, *A City in the Republic: Antebellum New York and the Origins of Machine Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 40.

esteem. In later years, the tribute to Old Hickory was surpassed by the observances for Abraham Lincoln after his assassination in 1864. The Civil War president's funeral train passed through the city and a number of other locales in the state. Mourners flocked by the hundreds of thousands to pay respects. Still, even with this outpouring of grief, Lincoln's death was not attended by a formal procession orchestrated by the city's Common Council.<sup>12</sup> This is not to say that Jackson was more important in the minds of New Yorkers; the circumstances were simply different. Jackson's commemoration was both a sign of respect and the celebration of a life that many knew for some time was close to an end. Lincoln's was a grief-stricken affair, wholly unexpected, and inextricably woven within the meaning of the war.

The grand Lincoln funeral train and the deaths of Washington and Jefferson have been well documented by historians. The same is not true for Jackson. This is an important point because Jackson's death was unlike any of the other presidents mentioned. His was the only one attended by a steadfast and ferocious partisanship. Washington had been a Federalist, but most Americans, including Republicans, refused to drag him into the party battles of the day. Jefferson was branded by opponents as a dangerous Jacobin, but in the aftermath of the War of 1812 and the corresponding demise of the Federalist Party, most forgot his party spirit and hailed him as a great political philosopher and one of the nation's leading men. Jefferson and John Adams had even reconciled and engaged in heartfelt correspondence until their simultaneous deaths on Independence Day in 1826. W. H. Harrison had simply not been in the public political eye long enough, nor had he engaged in presidential acts to associate him with the mainstream operations of Whigs.

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12. Gerald Kahler, "A Nation in Tears: Mourning the Death of George Washington in Print, 1799–1800" (Ph.D. diss., William and Mary, 2003); Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol*, (New York: Free Press, 1987); Merrill D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960); Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Burstein, *Mortal Remains: Death in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003)—see particularly the chapter entitled, "Immortalizing the Founding Fathers: The Excesses of Public Eulogy." Virtually nothing has been written on William Henry Harrison's death, though New York newspapers do compare the procession held in 1841 to that held for Jackson in 1845. Howard H. Peckham, "Tears For Old Tippecanoe: Religious Interpretations of President Harrison's Death," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 69, no. 1 (1959): 17–36; Scott D. Trostel, *The Lincoln Funeral Train: The Final Journey and National Funeral for Abraham Lincoln* (Fletcher: Cam-Tech Publishing, 2002); Victor Searcher, *The Farewell to Lincoln* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1965).

None of this was true for Andrew Jackson. When he died on June 8, 1845, the general remained on a partisan pedestal. His career as a presidential candidate and ultimately chief executive mirrored the evolution of the Second American Party System, the most striking features of which were the rise of highly organized, machine-like structures that bred rabid partisanship. By the early to mid-1830s, the Jacksonian Democrats were firmly entrenched, and the somewhat disjointed anti-Jackson movements had crystallized into the nascent Whig Party, which was committed to ending what Whigs viewed as Jackson's overarching and dangerous power. Thus Jackson was a key figure for both parties: a symbol for Democrats and an anti-symbol for Whigs. As historian Michael Holt once noted, "the Whig party began simply as a collection of the disparate foes of Andrew Jackson, and the party's name symbolized its opposition to the monarchical usurpations of King Andrew I."<sup>13</sup>

That Jackson was a divisive partisan figure while president is a common fact for historians who study the turbulent period in which he reigned. Yet the degree to which Jackson remained both an influential politician and political symbol following his departure from the White House has not been adequately addressed. Even after Jackson's retirement in 1837, the two parties refused to let him rest. Democrats had done too well flaunting the great Hero of New Orleans to relinquish the electoral power of such a symbol. Whigs, in turn, attacked the general at every opportunity. Originally the *raison d'être* of the party, Jackson continued to provide a rallying point for Whigs. In 1842, for example, both parties fought over a bill to refund a \$1,000 fine imposed on Jackson for arresting a federal judge in New Orleans in 1815. The debates lasted until 1844, with both Democrats and Whigs grandstanding in an attempt to benefit from supporting or opposing the general. Whigs argued that the sole reason for proposing the refund legislation was to parade Jackson's name before the people prior to the upcoming

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13. Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), 23; see also Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 28; Thomas Brown noted, "united by their hostility to the actions of Andrew Jackson rather than adherence to clearly defined principles, the Whigs were able to win presidential elections only in 1840 and 1848, when they did not encumber themselves with a party platform and ran military heroes of few known political convictions." See Brown, *Politics and Statesmanship: Essays on the American Whig Party* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 1, 3.



1844 presidential contest, and Democrats ultimately relished the Whig opposition for exactly that reason.<sup>14</sup>

The degree of Jackson's continuing partisan importance outlived even the fiery general. Many New York Whigs treated the news of Jackson's demise with scorn. Democrats, of course, announced that the partisan embers which had burned so hotly in previous years should at last be extinguished. With that expectation they believed the entire nation should mourn and honor the departure of a military hero and ex-president. Death, they insisted, was no time for party rancor. When some Whigs engaged in back-handed slaps or outright opposition to Jackson's memory, Democrats lashed out, decrying such acts as un-American, mean-spirited, and lacking decorum. They attempted to hold Whigs to the fire of public opinion (Democrats of course attempted to shape that opinion), insisting that men who could attack Jackson during a time of grieving were not true Americans. Yet Democrats themselves were largely responsible for Jackson's continued recognition as a potent political symbol. The Whig-sponsored Middletown *Constitution* of Connecticut understood the traditional Democratic strategy all too well, announcing that Jackson's "friends have for so long a time paraded his name before the public eye as a pattern for the 'democracy,' and have so long kept him in the political field, even to the moment of his departure, that we cannot regard him in the light which, we would had he been content to keep in that place which both his years and the custom of society demanded of him."<sup>15</sup>

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14. Charles Magill Conrad, a Whig from Louisiana, remarked that he "could not help suspecting that party considerations were lurking at the bottom of this disinterested movement." Senate, Senator Conrad of Louisiana on the Debate on the Fine on General Jackson, 27th Cong., 2d Sess., *Congressional Globe* (18 May 1842), 11, appendix: 373. Francis Preston Blair wrote Jackson, explaining "the Democracy are making the conduct of the Whigs in relation to it [the refund bill] a question before the people in the pending elections—how they will feel it. . . . I think it a good occasion to renew the impression on the public mind . . . [of] your glorious efforts in the last act of the war. . . . A revival of your military triumphs will give it [the Democratic party] strength in its present contest with Federalism." Francis Preston Blair to Andrew Jackson, 30 June 1842, *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, Library of Congress Microfilm Edition. For more on the refund episode, see Matthew S. Warshauer, "In the Beginning Was New Orleans: Andrew Jackson and the Politics of Martial Law," (Ph.D. diss., Saint Louis University, 1997). For more on Jackson's importance as a political figure following his retirement, see Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*.

15. "Death of General Jackson," *The Constitution*, 25 June 1845. For more on Connecticut's treatment of Jackson's death, see Matthew Warshauer, "Ridiculing the Dead: Andrew Jackson and Connecticut Newspapers," *Connecticut History* 40 (Spring 2001): 13–31.

Whigs had cause for such claims. Though Democrats were not so insensible as to admit that commemorating Jackson's death would be good for the party, it is not beyond reason to assume that this was a benefit. With almost constant electioneering in New York, the opportunity to raise Jackson to the Democratic masthead one last time must have been irresistible. Moreover, the event provided Democrats with a circumstance like no other. They could trumpet Jackson's greatness and value to the nation, herald his past acts and vaunted statesmanship, and all the while Whigs, according to mourning custom, would be constrained to join the solemnities or at the very least remain silent.

Some New York Whigs quickly recognized this point, arguing that Democrats were attempting to make political capital out of New York City's funeral obsequies. Democrats repeatedly announced that citizens from all parties and walks of life, regardless of "party spirit," came forth to show respect for Jackson, the greatest man of the age. To a degree there was truth in such professions. Members of both parties did participate. Yet there remained Democrats and Whigs who jumped at the opportunity to capitalize on and cross swords over the general's demise. Whereas most Whigs either maintained a conspicuous silence on the issue or merely announced that Jackson was dead, others accorded him a degree of credit for being a national hero and patriot. Some Whigs, however, refused to engage in even these moderate tributes, opting instead to remind people where the party had always stood when it came to King Andrew I. That some Whigs refused to "forgive and forget" tells us much about the party. The party had originated in opposition to Jackson; thus hatred for him lay at its core, its very reason for being. To yield from this position, even in the face of Jackson's death, deeply undermined party ideology. There was also the very tangible concern that stepping back from condemning Jackson, even for a brief moment, might seem to condone some of his presidential acts and influence future generations.

As the most remarkable display of public mourning in the nation, New York City's funeral procession is a fitting place to investigate both the type of commemoration that attended Jackson's death and the partisanship that swarmed around the fallen hero. The city was essentially a microcosm of the nation's Second American Party growth. As one

author noted, “political developments in New York were the cutting edge of a massive transformation of politics heralding the creation of what historian Joel Silbey has called ‘the American political nation.’”<sup>16</sup> Jackson’s popularity within the state rose sharply when Martin Van Buren allied himself with the general following the episodic presidential election of 1824. In 1828, Jackson garnered just under 51 percent of the popular vote and twenty-one of New York’s thirty-six electoral votes. Still, the margin in the popular vote was a mere 6,000 in just under 300,000 cast.<sup>17</sup>

Political issues within the Empire State swirled around the larger national debates of the time and thus the main catalyst for Whig Party development was Jackson’s attack on the Bank of the United States. His veto and subsequent removal of the deposits helped draw the disparate anti-Jackson, anti-Masonic, and anti-Van Buren’s Albany Regency forces into a single entity that first utilized the appellation “Whig” in the 1834 New York City municipal elections. Just a few months later, at a meeting in Utica, these groups formally adopted the Whig name and nominated William H. Seward for governor. Though he lost the race, Seward’s new party organized quickly and by 1840 captured the governor’s office and supported Harrison for the presidency by a margin of 13,000 votes. Thus in just a few years the Whig Party managed to become a viable competitor within the state. By the early 1840s, the two parties battled to control state and New York City offices, often squeaking out narrow victories. The Second American Party System was in full array by the time of Jackson’s death.<sup>18</sup>

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16. Milton M. Klein, ed., *The Empire State: A History of New York* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 382.

17. *Ibid.*, 375; Elliot R. Barkan, *Portrait of a Party: The Origins and Development of the Whig Persuasion in New York State* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), 95.

18. For more on the development of parties in New York, see Klein, ed., *The Empire State*, which is an outstanding synthesis of the subject. See also Bridges, *A City in the Republic*; Barkan, *Portrait of a Party*; Dealva Stanwood Alexander, *A Political History of the State of New York*, vol. 1 (New York: Henry Holt, 1906); Michael Wallace, “Changing Concepts of Party in the United States: New York, 1815–1828,” *American Historical Review* 74 (December 1968): 453–91. Amy Bridges notes, “although the Democrats won seven of the nine mayoral contests from 1834 (the first year the office was an elected one) to 1843 (the last year before the nativist American Republican Party appeared), they were hardly a confident majority party. In 1834, 1839, and 1841, the Democrats won with less than 51 percent of the two-party vote, and in 1840 and 1842 victory was accomplished with 52 percent of the two-party vote—a more comfortable margin, but hardly firm control. . . . Moreover, the Democrats did not control the Common Council as often as they won the mayor’s office. In nine elections to select

Still, regardless of the overall tight political competition between parties, Jackson seems to have attained significant public popularity well before his death. He had visited New York City on two occasions, first in 1819 on his way to West Point where his nephew was enrolled as a cadet. So great were the throngs who came out to see the famous Hero of the Battle of New Orleans that the general never made it to West Point. Instead he was wined and dined by the city's elite. The Common Council voted him the freedom of the city, presented in a gold box. Yet the visit also had its blunders. At a Tammany banquet Jackson mistakenly lauded De Witt Clinton, the driving force behind the Erie Canal and a man despised by Tammany. Fortunately, the Tammany men viewed it as humorous rather than as an offensive comment. Jackson's 1819 visit also predated his entrance into the battle over the presidency and hence partisanship most likely did not rear its head. The same cannot be said for Jackson's second visit to the city. In 1833, directly after his election to a second presidential term, Jackson engaged in a tour of northern states, New York included. Once again he was treated to crowds, ceremonies, and adulation. Even Philip Hone, the famed diarist and a man who despised the general, considered it an honor to join the escort on board the steamer that brought Jackson into New York harbor. Some 100,000 people flocked to the streets to catch a glimpse of the president, and he noted with great satisfaction, "never before have I witnessed such a scene of personal regard as I have to day." And once again, the visit was accompanied by a mishap. When crossing the bridge to Castle Garden, much of Jackson's entourage, though not the general himself, were dumped into the water when the bridge gave way.<sup>19</sup>

It seems, then, that the people of New York were enthralled by Jackson's fame. The city had always greeted him with pomp and circumstance, no matter the political undercurrents between the general's supporters and detractors. The commemorations for his funeral would surely match or even surpass those that had attended his visits. This

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the city's alderman, Whigs comprised the majority of council members on four occasions (1834, 1837, 1838, and 1842), the Democrats elected the majority an equal number of years (1839, 1840, 1841, and 1843), and in 1836 the council was evenly split." See Bridges, *A City in the Republic*, 64.

19. Robert Remini, *Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Democracy, 1833–1845* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 70–73; Robert Remini, *Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Freedom* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 375.

likelihood was secured by the fact that New York City had recently elected a Democratic mayor, William F. Havemeyer, as well as a Democratic Common Council.<sup>20</sup>

The history of what the Council arranged for Jackson's funeral is located largely in the myriad newspapers of the period. According to one source, New York boasted some 200 newspapers by 1840, with New York City as the print capital of America. As one historian noted, "New York was a newspaper town in a newspaper-reading age." In the city could be found James Watson Webb's *Courier and Enquirer*, James Gordon Bennett's incomparable *Herald*, and Horace Greeley's Whig-dominated *Tribune*. Even upstate New York had its important papers, with the *Albany Argus* and *Albany Evening Atlas* acquiring national reputations. "The newspaper editors were a powerful political force," commented another historian, "the partisan affiliations of these papers were quite explicit."<sup>21</sup> Indeed, one can peruse the papers and easily discern Democratic from Whig.

News of Jackson's death first arrived on the evening of June 16 and was published the following day. Many of the papers bordered their columns in black, the habiliments of mourning, and reprinted proclamations made by President James K. Polk, and Secretary of the Navy and War George Bancroft. Polk issued a statement on June 16, declaring, "Andrew Jackson is no more! . . . His country deplores his loss, and will ever cherish his memory." The president ordered all business in the executive departments suspended for one full day, as "a tribute of respect to the illustrious dead." Bancroft, known for his oratorical skills, issued a General Order on the same day. In grand style and with lofty praise, he heralded Jackson as "first in natural endowments and resources, not less than first in authority and station. The power of his mind

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20. Bridges, *A City in the Republic*.

21. Klein, ed., *The Empire State*, 347–49; Bridges, *A City in the Republic*, 49. The exact number of New York newspapers in 1845 is not easily discernable. Different sources provide different numbers. Some lists are not entirely accurate, often confusing dates and names. I have been able to locate records for approximately 136 papers in publication in 1845. Some 37 are either not owned by any repository or do not have the critical dates of June through August, the months that Jackson's death was discussed. I have been able to utilize more than 50 percent of the remaining papers, some 56 newspapers. For one list of papers, see Winifred Gregory, ed., *American Newspapers, 1821–1936: A Union List of Files Available in the United States and Canada* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1937).

impressed itself on the policy of his country, and still lives, and will live forever in the memory of its people. . . . Heaven gave him lengths of days and filled them with deeds of greatness. . . ." All troops under Bancroft's command were subsequently ordered to wear black crape on the left arm and sword for six months. On the day after receipt of the order, all naval vessels and military posts were ordered to fly their flags at half-mast and salute guns were to be fired at specified times throughout the day.<sup>22</sup> The nation's capital held a large ceremony on June 27 in front of the Washington Monument, where Bancroft once again showered visitors with words of Jackson's prowess.<sup>23</sup>

In large letters the *New York Evening Post* announced the "DEATH OF GEN. JACKSON," and stated, "the decease of this great man leaves a wide blank in the affections of the American people. No one, since the days of Washington, ever occupied so high a place in the hearts, and no name will go down to posterity so identified with the greatness, the glory and prosperity of the American people." Yet immediately after placing Jackson upon the same echelon as Washington, the *Post* quickly entered the partisan foray: "The halo of his glory shone far into the East. The growlings of party hate, and the aspersions of disappointed office seekers or partisans removed from the place at his accession to power, were not heard beyond the waters of the Atlantic. The violent animosity of the thousands who were thwarted in their eager pursuit after inordinate wealth, or who suffered in the enjoyment of well earned fortune by the financial measures of his administration did not reach foreign ears." In one short paragraph the *Post's* editors had championed Jackson's use of rotation in office (called the spoils system by his opponents), as well as his controversial bank policies, and dismissed Whig concerns as "murmurs" and "lurking hostility." The paper continued: "Before this generation passes away, the memory of Andrew Jackson will be universally revered, and all will unite in speaking of him to

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22. See for example, "By the President of the United States," *New York Herald*, 17 June 1845; *New York Morning News*, 18 June 1845; *Albany Evening Atlas*, 19 June 1845.

23. See George Bancroft, "Eulogy," in *Monument to the Memory of General Andrew Jackson: Containing Twenty-five Eulogies and Sermons Delivered on the Occasion of His Death*, ed. Benjamin M. Dusenbery (Philadelphia: n.p., 1848), 33–51. Numerous Democratic papers published Bancroft's eulogy in its entirety. See for example, *New York Evening Post*, 25 June 1845; *New York Morning News*, 2 July 1845.

their children and their children's children as the greatest and best of men."<sup>24</sup> The belief that generations living beyond the partisan battles of the day would come to appreciate Jackson's superior leadership and his importance to the era was a common theme among Democratic papers.<sup>25</sup>

The *West Troy Advocate and Waterliet Advertiser*, a small weekly paper located in Troy, just outside of Albany, characterized succinctly the relationship between Jackson and the partisan age: "The name and character of Gen. Jackson have been for so many years associated with politics, that it is hardly practicable to speak of them apart from the suspicion of party bias; yet we think that all parties ought now be prepared to shed a tear of sympathy over the bier of one who possessed almost unbounded popularity as a Chief Magistrate of this Union."<sup>26</sup> Needless to say this was the Democratic view, and party editors stressed repeatedly and ad nauseam that "private divisions were forgotten," "men of all parties united," "all party spirit seems to be laid aside," and "none of the rancour or party spleen or private hate has been suffered to make itself manifest."<sup>27</sup> This, of course, was at best a half-truth. Philip Hone recorded in his journal, "newspaper boys blow their horns and proclaim the death of Gen. Jackson," and flags in the harbor, on liberty poles, and at private homes were at half-mast. "Now to my thinking," confided Hone, "the country had greater cause to mourn on the day of his birth than on that of his decease. This iron-willed man has done more mischief than any man alive." Hone continued: "The undisputed head of a violent, proscriptive party, himself constituting its central power, he did more to break down the republican principles of

24. "Death of Gen. Jackson," *New York Evening Post*, 17 June 1845.

25. See for example the *Albany Argus*, 18 June 1845, which declared, "Soon, history, divested of the passions and interests with which he came in conflict, will do him justice, and all honor." See similar statements in "The Living Dog and the Dead Lion," Rochester *Daily Advertiser*, 19 June 1845; "The Life, Public Services and Last Days of General Jackson," *New York Herald*, 17 June 1845; *Niagara Democrat*, 9 July 1845; "Death of Gen. Jackson," Montgomery *Independent Republican*, 20 June 1845.

26. "Death of General Andrew Jackson," *West Troy Advocate and Waterliet Advertiser*, 25 June 1845.

27. "Gen. Jackson's Death," *Albany Argus*, 19 June 1845; "General Jackson," *ibid.*, 20 June 1845; "The Character of Gen. Jackson & His Extraordinary Influence," *ibid.*, 21 June 1845; "Gen. Jackson," *Daily Saratoga Republican*, 17 June 1845; "Respect to Gen. Jackson," *Schenectady Reflector*, 4 July 1845; *Oswego Palladium*, 24 June 1845; "Honors to the Illustrious Dead," *Kinderhook Sentinel*, 26 June 1845; *Ithaca Journal*, 25 June 1845; "General Jackson," *New York Evening Post*, 18 June 1845.

the government and enslave the minds of the people than all the rulers who went before him; and yet no man ever enjoyed so large a share of that pernicious popular homage called *popularity*. 'Old Hickory,' 'The Hero of New Orleans,' 'The Second Washington,' 'The Old General,' are the endearing epithets which old women have taught the 'lips of infancy to lisp,' and sturdy men have glorified in proclaiming at the top of their voices."<sup>28</sup>

George Templeton Strong, another well-known diarist, displayed more tact by noting that news of Jackson's death was rumored on June 16 and, ducking the precept that "say nothing but good of the deceased," recorded, "so before it's settled that he's actually dead, I'll take this opportunity to say that he's done the country more harm than any man that ever lived in it, unless it may have been Tom Jefferson." On the following day, when Jackson's death was confirmed, Strong observed mourning decorum by finding something good to say about the general: "The nation is, in the language of oratory, supposed to weep. Well, with all the man's transgressions, it should also be borne in mind that he was at least thoroughly in earnest in all he did. There was neither hesitation nor humbug in his composition, and what his hand found to do, he did with such might as was in him."<sup>29</sup>

The leading Whig newspaper in the city, and arguably the nation, Greeley's *Tribune*, did not bother with such limp praise. Though acknowledging Jackson "loved and sought to serve his country," Greeley declared, "we shower no indiscriminate, unmeaning eulogies on the departed. . . . We shudder at the deprivation of public morals and corruption of popular suffrage which has been created by his most wanton and unprovoked Proscription of political opponents throughout his Presidential career—when we reflect on the long array of usurpations and acts of violence which marked his rule, and the terrible legacies of disorder, crime and calamity they have left to the present and future generations, we rejoice and are thankful that we never, never for one moment aided or consented to his most unfortunate elevation." Here was hardly the lack of "party spirit" that Democrats had announced.

28. Alan Nevins, ed., *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828–1851* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), 732–33.

29. Alan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas, eds., *The Diary of George Templeton Strong: A Young Man in New York, 1835–1849* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 262–63.



Rocked by such militant declarations, the *Evening Post* ineffectually responded, “the *Tribune* . . . of this city, disgraces itself by an ebullition of party spleen and impotent malignity.”<sup>30</sup>

Greeley, however, was hardly done. In article after article he broadsided the dead general and his party, questioning with mocking clarity, “why do they [Democrats] ask for impossibilities?” when it comes to Whigs honoring Jackson. The *Tribune* answered forthrightly: “When we see an attempt made to consecrate and canonize by funeral honors the crimes against Liberty and Law which were committed by or through Gen. Jackson—to represent him as a second Washington—to hold up his career to the youth of our land as a model for their admiring imitation—we cannot be silent. . . . Let them do homage whom feeling or hypocrisy impels to it; we cannot.”<sup>31</sup>

Such sentiments were not expressed by the *Tribune* alone. Other Whig newspapers from across the state joined in the condemnation of Jackson, though they did not engage in quite the level of acrimony engendered by Greeley. Some even acknowledged the general’s service as a “gallant soldier.” The *Advocate*, based in Batavia, just east of Buffalo, announced, “we never praised him while living, and we cannot flatter him dead.” The editor continued, noting that Jackson’s military exploits had “showered additional luster upon our country’s annals,” but added, “in a civil career his great name, by misfortune, rather than a fault of his own, was made to sanction acts most unhappy to the honor and welfare of the country he so heroically defended.” Though hoping that the “evil” done by Jackson would be “buried with him,” The *Advocate* stated, with not a little irony, that it would be “an ungracious task to review with the slightest censure the history of one over whom the grave . . . has so lately closed.”<sup>32</sup>

The idea that Jackson was somehow manipulated by others was a fairly common theme among some Whig papers. The *Journal and Eagle*, published in Poughkeepsie on the Hudson River above West Point, asserted that Jackson’s course was “molded and shaped by sycophants

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30. “Death of Gen. Jackson,” *New York Tribune*, 17 June 1845; *New York Evening Post*, 18 June 1845.

31. “Gen. Jackson’s Fame,” *New York Tribune*, 19 June 1845.

32. “Death of Gen. Jackson,” *Advocate*, 17 June 1845.

and demagogues, with a view to promote their selfish or ambitious aims." The editor also commended the general for his military services, but insisted, "we have no inclination to exalt the virtues of the departed by lavish encomiums."<sup>33</sup>

That some Whig editors dared to vent their "party spleen" at such a time did nothing to stop Democrats who were intent on flooding the state with news of the fallen chieftain, reactions to his death, and organizing an imposing tribute. Democratic sheets published myriad items that in some way touched on the old hero. Long biographical sketches appeared, as did diaries about the general's final days, statements by his physician, news of the funeral in Nashville, personal anecdotes, the last letter that he penned, as well as the details of his will and the inscription on his tomb. Some papers even printed old speeches, such as Jackson's "Farewell Address."<sup>34</sup> Anything related to Old Hickory was fair game.

The *New York Morning News* expressed disbelief at Jackson's passing: "Is it possible that General Jackson is really dead? It seems harder to believe of him than of other men." "Yet it is the sober and solemn truth," lamented the editor, "and the announcement of the fact has already swept across the greater part of the length and breadth of the land, like a knell in which every man on whose ear it strikes feels that he has a direct and personal concern." The *Herald* reported that the news "produced a marked sensation in this city. Many persons immediately closed their stores—flags were hoisted half-mast high on the liberty poles—and throughout the community, all seemed impressed with the feeling that a mighty man had departed forever."<sup>35</sup> In the various courts throughout the city and in Albany, the news was greeted with stirring elocutions from judges and lawyers. Chancellor Walworth of the Court for the Correction of Errors spoke of the "illustrious deceased," then

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33. "Death of Gen. Jackson," *Poughkeepsie Journal and Eagle*, 21 June 1845; see also, for example, "Death of Gen. Jackson," *Troy Daily Whig*, 18 June 1845.

34. See for example "A Biographical Sketch of Gen. Jackson," *Albany Evening Atlas*, 18 June 1845; "General Jackson's Last Letter," *ibid.*, 19 June 1845; "Funeral at the Hermitage," *Albany Argus*, 21 June 1845; "A Diary about Gen. Jackson," *New York Evening Post*, 18 June 1845; "General Jackson's Farewell Address," *New York Morning News*, 20 June 1845; "Death of General Jackson—the last scene of life," *New York Herald*, 17 June 1845; "Personal Anecdotes of General Jackson," *ibid.*, 18 June 1845; "Accounts of General Jackson's Last Moments, from his Family Physician," *ibid.*, 24 June 1845.

35. "General Jackson is Dead!" *New York Morning News*, 17 June 1845; "Death of General Jackson," *New York Herald*, 17 June 1845.

immediately adjourned the court. Similar occurrences followed in the U.S. Circuit Court, State Circuit Court, Superior Court, and Court of Common Pleas. In the State District Court, Benjamin F. Butler, a lawyer and personal friend of the general's, announced his death, and Judge Betts subsequently suspended court for the day. In Albany, District Attorney E. C. Litchfield rose in the Court of Common Pleas and lauded Jackson's patriotism. When news of his passing reached the West Point Military Academy, General Winfield Scott announced, "a great man has fallen," and quickly canceled the day's scheduled exams. Even the New York City Customs Collector posted a notice recommending all officers and persons connected with the Custom House to wear crape on the left arm for thirty days.<sup>36</sup>

Private and civic societies acted with alacrity to make preparations in honor of the departed. On the very day in which papers announced Jackson's death, notices appeared from the Tammany Society and the Board of Aldermen. "A brother is no more," announced Tammany. The society then advertised, in several editions, a meeting to make arrangements. Alderman Daniel Briggs rose when the news of Jackson's death arrived on the evening of the 16th and spoke of the ex-president's virtues. Briggs also proposed resolutions for the formation of a committee composed of members from each board of the Common Council, which would work with the mayor to organize a meeting for funeral preparations. On the next day special committees from New York and Brooklyn made up the Committee of Arrangements and determined that they would meet each day in the aldermen's board chamber from 2 to 4 p.m. to make plans for the procession scheduled on Tuesday, June 24.<sup>37</sup>

From the moment Jackson's death was reported, and especially following the organization of the Committee of Arrangements, resolutions and calls for meetings flooded the columns of New York newspapers. As one historian noted, "the ward was the basic unit of political

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36. "Death of General Jackson," *ibid.*, 18 June 1845; Butler, *New York Evening Post*, 18 June 1845; "Funeral Honors to General Jackson. Albany Common Pleas," *Albany Argus*, 20 June 1845; "Winfield Scott and Andrew Jackson," *New York Evening Post*, 19 June 1845; "City Intelligence," *New York Morning News*, 21 June 1845.

37. "Tammany Society, or Columbian Order," *New York Evening Post*, 17, 19, 20 June 1845; "Board of Aldermen," *ibid.*, 17 June 1845. Five aldermen were chosen to represent that body: Daniel Briggs, Benson, Bernard Messerole, Thomas Tappan, and Emanuel Hart.

life" in New York City, which was divided into some twenty wards in 1845, and lofty tributes to Jackson's patriotism were issued from each. Representative was the resolution from the Fifth Ward: "Whereas, It has pleased the disposer of all events, in his inscrutable wisdom, to call from among us the great and good man, General Andrew Jackson, the enlightened statesman, the victorious general—a man who has devoted his transcendent talents half a century to the public services of our beloved country. Suffice it to say, the shades of the Hermitage will be as sacred to the patriot as are those of Mount Vernon." The ward committee then requested that all members wear black crape upon the left arm for thirty days.<sup>38</sup>

As preparations for the funeral continued, notices from an incredibly diverse number of organizations filled the newspapers. Dozens of military companies issued resolutions and orders calling for full-dress assemblies, often announcing that they must prove through action that they are deserving of the honor to march in such a tribute to the great Jackson. Commander Vincent of the 106th Light Guard, for example, decreed, "on this occasion every man is expected and required to be on parade. A Post of Honor will be assigned to the corps, and the fullest ranks must prove that the Light Guard are worthy of such a distinction."<sup>39</sup> Virtually all military companies and regiments were ordered to wear the usual badge of mourning, black crape, upon the left arm for thirty or sixty days. Some companies ordered officers to don white pants and gloves, and to place crape on their sword hilts as well. Some soldiers also adorned their guns with crape, and company flags were shrouded in black.<sup>40</sup>

Private organizations also raced to show affection and respect for the general. Resolutions came forth from the Independent Order of

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38. Bridges, *A City in the Republic*, 74; "Fifth Ward," *New York Evening Post*, 21 June 1845. For additional ward resolutions, see as examples "Eighth Ward," "Ninth Ward," "Tenth Ward," *ibid.*, 21 June 1845; see also, *Report of the Committee of Arrangements of the Common Council of the City of New York, upon the Funeral Ceremonies in Commemoration of the Death of Gen. Andrew Jackson, Ex-President of the United States* (New York: Printed by Order of the Board, 1845). The author is grateful to a private collector, Bill Cook, of Tennessee, for copying his edition of the report.

39. "Special Order, Light Guard—One Hundred and Sixth Regiment," *Report of the Committee of Arrangements*, 151.

40. See virtually any set of military orders in *Report of the Committee of Arrangements*. Some of this information is also published in the New York daily papers such as the *Evening Post* and *Morning News*.

Odd Fellows as well as the Independent Order of Rechabites. Separate statements were issued by the students, faculty, and medical faculty of New York University and the University of the City of New York. Numerous city fire departments, the Masonic lodges, the Cordwainers of New York, the Butchers' Association, as well as the Stone Cutters and Journeymen Granite Cutters, joined the movement to honor Jackson. So too did the Mercantile Library Association, Literary Society, and French, Italian, German, Hibernian, and Shamrock Benevolent Societies. Even the Piano Forte Makers and the New-York Waterman Society sent declarations. In all, some twenty-four military regiments and brigades published resolutions, along with more than sixty private and civic societies. All of these organizations, and more, took part in the grand procession. The Committee of Arrangements also sent letters of invitation to prominent men, such as Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, Martin Van Buren, James Buchanan, and Winfield Scott.<sup>41</sup>

Businesses also prepared for the quickly approaching solemnities. Numerous advertisements for mourning badges and prints of the general appeared in city newspapers. The badges themselves revealed the degree to which different organizations attempted to stand out in honoring Jackson. With literally dozens of different badges, many of which were created specifically for a given organization, the themes emblazoned on these mourning insignia covered everything from the Battle of New Orleans and the Seminole Affair to the Bank War and Nullification. Most had some symbol, a flag or eagle, revealing the intense nationalism that swarmed about Jackson's memory.<sup>42</sup>

Still, though the city scrambled to prepare, all did not go smoothly. When the New-York Historical Society met on the evening of June 19, with the largest attendance ever witnessed, opposition appeared to the

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41. All of these groups and the letters to special guests are listed in *Report of the Committee of Arrangements*. There are also some groups that do not appear in the Report, but did publish resolutions in newspapers. See for example "Iron Sides Club," *New York Morning News*, 19 June 1845.

42. For advertisements, see "Mourning Badges," *New York Morning News*, 21 June 1845; "Mourning Badges," *New York Evening Post*, 20 June 1845; "Mourning Badge," *ibid.*; for other Jackson-related items, see "General Jackson," *ibid.*, 25 June 1845; "Daguerreotype Likeness of General Jackson," *ibid.* For information on the variety of mourning badges that exist along with their descriptions, see Roger A. Fischer and Edmund B. Sullivan, *American Political Ribbons and Ribbon Badges* (Lincoln, Mass.: Quartermain Publications, 1985).

resolutions put forth by General Prosper M. Wetmore. There was nothing particularly special in the resolutions. They, like most, expressed sorrow at Jackson's death and lauded his courage and patriotism. Some animosity may have come from the remarks of Benjamin F. Butler, who seconded Wetmore's resolutions and in doing so made a half-hearted, disingenuous statement about steering clear of politically related topics. "I shall," stated Butler, "in the few remarks I make, very carefully avoid any references to those great political events and questions with which he was connected, for important as they were in their bearing on the happiness and prosperity of this great people, and related to the destiny of this nation, and in some degree the world—conspicuous as will be the page they shall fill, and ample as will be the share they will occupy in our country's history as well as that of the world, I could not touch on them now without exciting some feeling, that should, at least for the time, be buried into oblivion." Technically, Butler was true to his word. He made no reference to specific measures, but lauding the greatness of all that Jackson did was sure to ruffle Whig feathers.<sup>43</sup>

Thus William Fessenden wasted little time in opposing the measures: "I don't see why a society such as this should be called on to put forth resolutions commendatory of the life and character of General Jackson." The moment the statement was uttered shouts boomed from the gallery: "Whose [*sic*] that? . . . Pooh! It's only a Yankee lawyer!" Fessenden continued, "It is true he was President of the United States and a Major General of the army—but what has that to do with this Society—with historical literature? . . . I say I cannot approve of those resolutions, and I will oppose them, though I stand alone. For 30 years I have sincerely and fervently opposed Gen. Jackson, and I cannot consent now, because he is dead, to approve of his conduct." Fessenden sat down amidst laughter and hisses. During the confusion Charles King stood and seconded Fessenden's sentiments. The Democratic presses quickly reported these men's "monstrous" behavior. The *New York Morning News* stated,

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43. For the resolutions, see *Report of the Committee of Arrangements*, 154–55, or "Historical Society," *New York Herald*, 20 June 1845. The information on what occurred in the Historical Society meeting was gleaned from a variety of newspapers: "The Historical Society," *New York Evening Post*, 20 June 1845; "Meeting of the Historical Society," *New York Morning News*, 20 June 1845; "New-York Historical Society," *Albany Argus*, 23 June 1845.

“We have heard but one opinion respecting the disgraceful attempt at the Historical Society, on Thursday evening, to insult the memory of General Jackson and the feelings of his friends, by opposition to the resolutions offered by Gen. Wetmore. All parties unite in condemning and despising it.” The editor also commented on the “bitter bigots of partisanship of whom Fessenden is a sample, and a *Tribune* a worthy organ.” The *Evening Post* added to the Democratic condemnation and placed the matter in the context of proper decorum: “The editor of the *American* frequently asserted that ‘all decency and respectability of the community, was to be found in the whig party.’ We now have the evidence of the *decency* of Mr. King and Mr. Fessenden, two very prominent gentlemen of that party.”<sup>44</sup>

Horace Greeley of the *Tribune* fired right back, retorting, “Let this pass for what it is worth.” He also defended Fessenden and King: “they spoke truth as became freemen. . . . Yet for this they are black guarded . . . as though they had been guilty of some exceeding baseness!” Greeley went on to argue that they would have been guilty of the worst hypocrisy had they fought Jackson for years, then supported lofty statements commendatory of his presidency. The *Tribune* also proclaimed that it was not because Jackson was the leader of an opposing party that Whigs could not laud him. “We can cheerfully do honor to a political opponent, were that all. But in paying marked honors to Gen. Jackson, we are called to hallow brilliant and successful defiance of Law.”<sup>45</sup>

The *Tribune* also had sharp words for Daniel Webster, who attended and spoke at the Historical Society meeting. This devout Whig heralded Jackson “as a soldier of dauntless courage and great daring and perseverance. . . .” Webster also explained that for many years he had the “misfortune not to be able to concur with many of the most important measures of his [Jackson’s] administration.” To such a statement Greeley responded with disbelief: “*Misfortune*, Mr. Webster? No, it was

44. “New-York Historical Society,” *Albany Evening Atlas*, 21 June 1845; “Meeting of the Historical Society,” *New York Morning News*, 21 June 1845; another paper noted, “The conduct of Mr. Fessenden seems to be universally reprobated. A correspondent informs us that of from 200 to 300 persons present, only three or four negatives were heard on the adoption of Gen. Wetmore’s resolutions.” “The Historical Society and General Jackson,” *Albany Evening Atlas*, 23 June 1845; “The Historical Society,” *New York Evening Post*, 21 June 1845.

45. “Deification of Crime,” *New York Tribune*, 27 June 1845; “Honors to Gen. Jackson,” *ibid.*, 21 June 1845.

your DUTY, and you discharged it generously toward him, nobly for yourself, faithfully to your country." Greeley concluded: "We regret that the universal prevalence of cant and hypocrisy imposed on Mr. Webster the seeming necessity of saying" it was his misfortune to disagree with Jackson. Webster did not fare much better with the Democratic presses. The *Albany Evening Atlas* remarked, "Mr. Webster is not the appropriate person, in any respect, to speak of the character of Andrew Jackson." The *Albany Argus* noted "it has been our 'misfortune' to differ [with Webster] ever since we held an editorial pen."<sup>46</sup>

To be sure, New York was not the only city in the state to wrestle over funeral arrangements. In preparing for a ceremony in Rochester, a dispute arose in the Common Council when "the unwillingness of several of the members was boldly expressed." Three aldermen ultimately voted against the arrangements, but the *Daily Advertiser* reported that they had later changed their minds: "For them it was too bitter a pill to take, and they rejected it. Subsequently, however, they requested to have the vote unanimous, *for the sake of appearances*. Though opposed to the resolution, they were *ashamed to have it known to the public that they had so voted!*" If any shame actually existed, it was surely the result of Democratic pressure, and the competing Rochester newspaper, the Whig-backed *Daily Democrat*, defended the three aldermen by blasting the *Advertiser*: "Instead of censure, those gentleman deserved the thanks of honorable men. From a spirit of courtesy they consented to a unanimous vote; but their conduct was too exalted to be appreciated by the author of the article in the Advertiser—an article which, if we are not mistaken, was written by a prominent member of the 'button hole' democracy. If our loco foco friends wish to find fault with any of the majority of the Board, they should choose some other subject than the death of Gen. Jackson."<sup>47</sup>

As this partisan bickering continued, the time for the New York City procession grew near. The Committee of Arrangements had a formidable task with only six days to prepare the ceremony. On June 23 the

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46. "The Historical Society and General Jackson," *Albany Evening Atlas*, 21 June 1845; "Honors to Gen. Jackson," *New York Tribune*, 21 June 1845; "New-York Historical Society," *Albany Evening Atlas*, 19 June 1845; "Of the *Tribune's* Attack on Webster," *Albany Argus*, 24 June 1845.

47. "The Common Council," *Daily Advertiser*, 28 June 1845; *Rochester Daily Democrat*, 30 June 1845.





Banner from the *New York Herald* announcing Jackson's funeral procession. *New York Herald*, June 25, 1845.

Board of Aldermen held a special meeting at which a proposal was put forth to provide \$2,000 to defray the ceremony's costs. The bill was ultimately amended to \$2,500 and passed without dissent. Starting on the 22nd and continuing until the 24th, a number of newspapers filled their columns with a detailed "Programme of Arrangements." The procession was to commence from Battery Park at 2 p.m. with the firing of three cannons, and then on to Chatham Street, to East Broadway and on to Grand. From there the sea of mourners would march through the Bowery to Union Park, around the Park, down Broadway and past the front of City Hall, where the main orations would take place, then ultimately return to the Battery. The Committee of Arrangements also decreed that "no banner bearing political devices, or inscriptions, shall be admitted in the Procession."<sup>48</sup> This, of course, hardly mattered, considering that Jackson was amply identified with the Democratic Party.

On the day prior to the procession the various avenues into New York were crowded with visitors. The *Morning News* reported: "The various channels of travel between this city and the surrounding country, extending to Philadelphia south, to Albany north, and to Boston east, were yesterday and last night loaded down with the best class of people." The paper also insisted that the impending ceremony was

48. "Special Meeting of the Board of Aldermen," *New York Evening Post*, 23 June 1845; "Programme of Arrangements for the Funeral Obsequies of the Late Andrew Jackson," *ibid.* See the same item in *New York Morning News*, 23 June 1845 and *New York Herald*, 23 June 1845.

important to America's reputation. Some parts of Europe still considered the United States an upstart nation, and thus the editor of the *News* proudly declared, "the city of New York will today present the spectacle of at least *four hundred thousand* freemen united as with one heart in a great and impressive vindication of our country from foreign calumny, and testify to the world that *Republics are not ungrateful*."<sup>49</sup> Nor was this a singular sentiment. When the citizens of Albany joined on June 30 for their own procession, the day's orator, Attorney General John Van Buren, posed an important series of questions that a foreign traveler might ask about the ceremony: "What high title did the illustrious person hold whom you have assembled to honor?" "What high station did he occupy at the time of his death?" "Perhaps he was a neighbor?" "But, probably, he was a visitor to your city, and personally well known to the inhabitants." "Then he must have had relations dwelling amongst you, and a long line of the bereaved and sorrowing swell this crowd or suggested this demonstration." To all of these queries Van Buren answered with a resounding "No Sir!" and continued: "Confounded by the peculiarity of these circumstances, he [the traveler] might then suggest that some law had been passed, or some proclamation or order issued by some superior power, directing this assemblage and ceremony. Still, the answer would be No, sir, no! this is the spontaneous gathering of the people themselves, to do honor to a private citizen, who was a public benefactor!—And you, fellow citizens, do right thus to honor the illustrious dead. It is particularly an American duty." And it seems that Jackson too understood, and embraced, the importance of an American burial. When Commodore Jesse Duncan Elliot offered the general a sarcophagus brought from Palestine and thought to be made for the Roman Emperor Severus, Jackson declined, explaining, "I cannot consent my mortal body shall be laid in a repository prepared for an Emperor or King—my republican feelings and principles forbid it—the simplicity of our system of government forbids it."<sup>50</sup>

49. *New York Morning News*, 24 June 1845.

50. "Oration," *Albany Evening Atlas*, 1 July 1845; Remini, *Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Democracy*, 517–18. The *Steuben Farmers' Advocate* published a poem lauding Jackson for the refusal of the sarcophagus. See "Lines Suggested by the refusal of General Jackson to accept the sarcophagus offered to him by the National Institute, 25 June 1845. As an interesting aside, consider the 1912 funeral of Japan's Meiji Emperor, which was orchestrated by the government. "The governing elites

Jackson may not have been royalty in the European sense of the term, but Van Buren's questions were quite apt considering the spectacle of the various ceremonies. In New York City bells and alarms rang throughout the day, all flags were placed at half-mast from sunrise to sunset, and all places of business were closed. U.S. troops stationed in the harbor fired minute guns from noon until sunset, and the Veteran Corps of Artillery fired seventy-eight volleys at noon to signify Jackson's age at death. Minute guns were also fired throughout the day at Brooklyn Heights, Tompkins Square, and the Battery. The procession itself consisted of fourteen divisions that embodied the 40,000 marchers. The *Evening Post* reported, "it would be impossible to give our readers who are not acquainted with the city any idea of the length of this procession. . . . It would be equally impossible to give a satisfactory description of the various bodies, military and civil that turned out on the occasion. The military companies mustered more numerous than we have ever before known, and with their splendid uniforms, made a brilliant appearance."<sup>51</sup>

Heading the first division was the Grand Marshall, General Gilbert Hopkins, followed by his aides and a variety of military brigades. The second division included ceremony officials, the day's orator, Benjamin F. Butler, as well as Martin Van Buren, Governor Wright, Winfield Scott, and other national, state, and military dignitaries. As these two divisions passed, spectators counted upwards of 595 mounted horseman, 51 carriages, and some 15,000 marchers. In the second division appeared the great funeral urn preceded by 28 pallbearers. Upon the gilt and shrouded urn were the names "Washington, Hamilton, Lafayette, Harrison, and Jackson." Directly behind it stood an imposing bronze eagle, and from its beak hung a scroll with "Jackson" emblazoned across the page. The urn was borne on a large car covered with black broadcloth and drawn by four white horses bedecked with plumes and funeral trappings. Four mullatoes dressed in turbans and oriental costumes

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believed that an imperial funeral required the public demonstration of the greatness and depth of the imperial and hence the Japanese past." Some 20,000 people marched in the funeral procession. See Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

51. "Programme of Arrangements for the Funeral Obsequies of the Late Andrew Jackson," *New York Evening Post*, 23 June 1845; "The Funeral of General Jackson," *ibid.*, 25 June 1845.



Many civic as well as military organizations took part in the procession. *New York Herald*, June 25, 1845.

guided the car.<sup>52</sup> The *Albany Evening Atlas* remarked: “Those who have seen the different grand displays that have been made in the Empire State for the last 50 years, say there was never one equal to the present on point of numbers, good order, respectability, and good arrangements. One spirit appeared to pervade the mass, to sink all political feeling and aid in doing justice to the memory of one who had served long and faithfully for his country’s weal.”<sup>53</sup>

The many military and civic societies made up the rest of the divisions in the procession, and included more than forty musical bands. The fourth division was composed entirely of New York firemen, and the city’s newspapers revealed a particular admiration for this group. “They were all stalwart, manly looking fellows, several thousand strong,” reported the *Herald*. “On their stern and honest faces, courage, bravery, intrepidity, and fearlessness were stamped in indelible characters.”<sup>54</sup>

New York City must have been a blur of sights and sounds. “The whole day was given up to it by the whole city,” announced the *Morning News*. “The entire population were abroad on the line of the procession, lining the stoops and sidewalks, and crowding the windows from roof to ground floor, while numbers unparalleled on any former occasion

52. Accounts of the funeral procession come from three main sources on June 25 and 26: *New York Evening Post*, *New York Morning News*, *New York Herald*. Specific quotes will be referenced by article, otherwise the general description of the ceremony comes from the aforementioned sources.

53. “The Funeral Honors to Jackson,” *Albany Evening Atlas*, 26 June 1845.

54. “The Grand Funeral Obsequies of General Jackson,” *New York Herald*, 25 June 1845. For information on the importance of fire associations and their political connections, see Bridges, *A City in the Republic*, 75–76.

thronged the procession itself.” The *Mohawk Courier*, a weekly paper located in upstate New York, attempted to provide its readers with some conception of the procession: “Never before has the great commercial metropolis of the Union exhibited such a spectacle—never were the god-like virtues of any man more deserving of such commemoration.” The paper continued:

Conceive if you can the home of a great city of 400,000 souls at mid-day, hushed almost to the silence of the tomb—stores closed, hotels, markets, and all places of public resort, clad in the habiliments of mourning. Look around you, in this solemn stillness, and behold the glorious eagles, stars and stripes of the Union everywhere festooned with crape; see the innumerable flags of the shipping, of all nations, with which the harbor of New York is ever crowded, everywhere displayed at half-mast; behold, in the fixed countenances and noiseless step of all, the sure indications that some momentous event in which the whole people are deeply interested, is now transpiring. Anon this breathless silence is broken by the deep booming of heavy minute guns from the forts at the entrance, and the ships of war lying within the harbor; at the same instance the church bells in the city peal forth a solemn funeral toll. The streets are now everywhere filling with countless civic bodies, all bearing appropriate insignia of woe. . . . You gaze with astonishment upon this brilliant pageant—you have long expected its termination, but your ears are still greeted by the solemn role of the muffled drum and the shrill air-cleaving notes of the fife. The unending column is still moving before you. You turn your eyes towards its head, but your sight cannot reach it. You look for its rear, but it is still beyond your vision.<sup>55</sup>

Amidst all of the pomp and pageantry occurred numerous incidents, some humorous and others horrible. At the corner of the post office on Chatham Square a “little old fellow” was busy selling root beer and, reported the *Herald*, “he appeared doing a flourishing business, and the pennies were fast accumulating in his capacious pockets—but, alas! . . . in drawing a glass of the inviting beverage out flew the ‘bung,’ and high

55. “The Funeral Solemnity of Yesterday,” *New York Morning News*, 25 June 1845; *Mohawk Courier*, 10 July 1845.

flew the liquid, descending in showers on the silk shawls and straw bonnets of the ladies and ruining the arrangement of sundry neck cloths and linen shirts." The *Herald* also noted that the city's young women graced the men in uniform with garlands of fresh flowers, and that in the midst of this revelry "the pickpockets were quite busy in exercising their craft." Other thefts also occurred. One Christian Russ, a watch-maker, found his shop robbed and seven gold patent lever watches, a gold chain, and other articles of value worth \$500 stolen. More dire incidents also accompanied the ceremonies. The *Morning News* reported that on Broadway a young boy was run down and "was so dreadfully injured it was feared he would not survive." In the same area, near Duane Street, a young man had one of his limbs run over and was taken into Mr. Bloomer's hat store. On the corner of Thirteenth Street, a civilian's horse reared and the rider fell backward but was unhurt. A member of the Washington Greys military company was thrown from his horse on the corner of Bowery and Tenth Street, but remounted to the applause of the crowd. Finally, a paper reported that one man "was indiscreet enough to ride against the current, and even resisted and struck one of the aides who attempted to turn him aside into Grand Street. He was speedily unhorsed and led off to the Tombs."<sup>56</sup>

Beyond these incidents, many newspapers remarked on the good order and solemnity of the people. The spectacle even moved some to literary passion. After seeing the great funeral urn, a poet composed some brief lines: "Whence yon long train? And why the solemn tread? Vesperia answered—my son is dead!"<sup>57</sup> As the procession wound its way through the city's streets and ultimately returned to Battery Park, the ceremonies culminated in front of City Hall, where a stage was erected and the many dignitaries gathered in front of a large crowd to hear Benjamin F. Butler eulogize Jackson. Directly before Butler's rostrum stood the imposing funeral urn, and the speaker assured listeners, "it is fitting, it is right, that such tributes should be paid to those who,

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56. "The Grand Funeral Obsequies of General Jackson—The Order of Procession—Incidents and Proceedings throughout the Route—Every Honor to the Memory of the Brave," *New York Herald*, 25 June 1845; "Incidents," *New York Morning News*, 25 June 1845; "Incidents of the Day," *Albany Argus*, 27 June 1845.

57. "On beholding the Urn and Car: In the Procession in Honor of the Funeral Obsequies of Gen. Jackson, in New York, June 24, 1845," *New York Morning News*, 25 June 1845.

in council or in camp, have advanced the glory of their country, and the welfare of their kind.” Butler spoke of Jackson as the “heaven-appointed and heaven-assisted warrior,” a man with “superhuman activity,” and closed by avowing, “embossed in a sacred solitude, stands the tomb of the Hermitage, henceforth to divide with Mount Vernon, the respect, the admiration, and the reverence of mankind.” Following the oration, the Reverend Dr. Krebs delivered a prayer, after which the New York Music Society, composed of over one hundred men and women, sang a requiem from Mendelssohn’s *Oratorio of St. Paul*. The Reverend Dr. Wainwright then read the benediction, and the ceremony terminated with the United States Troops on duty firing a volley of three rounds.<sup>58</sup>

The day after the ceremony the *Herald* devoted the vast majority of the edition to describing the events and adorned the front page with a large woodblock print of Jackson surrounded by flags, with the various divisions of the procession appearing below. Capturing the feeling of reverence that awed many who attended the event, the editor announced: “With such a ceremony for a closing scene, who would not live, fight, and die for his country—who would not serve long years of toil and hardship if such a fate might be the reward. Never have we witnessed so imposing, brilliant, and solemn a spectacle.”<sup>59</sup>

The official ceremony directed by the Committee of Arrangements was accompanied by others within the city. The French Opera company, for example, hired the Tabernacle Choir and in the evening following the procession performed Mozart’s *Requiem*. At Castle Garden, which was located on the water near the Battery and had been visited by Jackson during a presidential tour in 1834, a cannon’s boom at 9 p.m. from the U.S.S. *North Carolina* signaled an oration by Professor Charles Whitney. He assured the city’s inhabitants, “. . . the great democracy of New York should as ever take the lead; they should be the chief mourners in his funeral obsequies, as they have been the guard of honor, the Tenth Legion, on the field of his political glories.” The *Steuben Farmers’ Advocate* reported: “In the evening the scene at Castle Garden was

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58. Benjamin F. Butler, “The Oration,” *Report of the Committee of Arrangements*, 266–85. Butler’s oration is also available in several newspapers. See for example, *New York Herald*, 25 June 1845; *New York Morning News*, 25 June 1845. For information on the prayer, music, and benediction, see *Report of the Committee of Arrangements*.

59. The Grand Funeral Obsequies of General Jackson . . . , *New York Herald*, 25 June 1845.

equally magnificent; the solemn tones of the powerful orchestra filled that vast amphitheatre as it mournfully chaunted [*sic*] the parting sympathies of a nation's grief."<sup>60</sup>

Nor was New York the only city within the state to honor Jackson. A similar ceremony occurred at the capital, Albany, on June 30. It too was preceded by numerous published resolutions and meetings in preparation of the scheduled event. The *Albany Argus* noted, "every part of it [Albany] offered some appropriate and feeling testimonial of the national bereavements. All the public offices, stores, shops and places of resort were closed during the day. The pillars of the capital were entwined with mourning emblems, and the capital flag, surrounded by a black border, and the flags of the shipping, were displayed at half mast." The paper also reported that certain stores presented imposing mourning displays. The gable of one shop was "literally covered with mourning emblems." The *Albany Evening Atlas* announced: "Our limits will not permit us—they would not were they quadrupled in capacity—to present at length the numerous expressions of sorrow and lamentation which come to us from all quarters, in view of the late bereavement." On the day of the ceremony some fifty-one organizations marched in the procession during a drizzling rain. At one point in the parade the "sluices in the heavens seemed to have been suddenly opened and the water descended in torrents." The civic portion of the procession fled, while the military companies stood their ground for some twenty minutes until ordered to retreat. The *Atlas* ultimately declared that the ceremony "was not merely a cold and decorous acknowledgement of the former position and influence of the illustrious dead, but was a sincere, heartfelt tribute of love, respect and gratitude from all classes, parties, ages, and ranks of citizens."<sup>61</sup>

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60. "The Funeral Obsequies," *New York Herald*, 20 June, 1845; "Eulogy Delivered at Castle Garden on Tuesday, 24th inst., By Professor Whitney," *New York Evening Post*, 25 June 1845 (includes the entire eulogy); "Eulogy on Jackson—The Castle Gardens," *Albany Argus*, 28 June 1845; for Jackson's visit in 1834, see Remini, *Andrew Jackson: The Course of American Democracy*, 71; "The Funeral Obsequies in Honor of General Jackson," *Steuben Farmers' Advocate*, 2 July 1845.

61. "Funeral Honors to the Memory of Andrew Jackson in the City of Albany," *Albany Argus*, 2 July 1845; "Funeral Honors to Gen. Jackson," *Albany Evening Atlas*, 3 July 1845; "Meeting of Joint Committee," *Albany Evening Atlas*, 25 June 1845; "Funeral Obsequies, In honor of General ANDREW JACKSON, ex-president of the United States, Albany, June 30th, 1845," *Albany Evening Atlas*, 27 June 1845; "Funeral Obsequies of Gen. Jackson," *Albany Evening Journal*, 1 July 1845; "The Funeral Honors to Jackson," *Albany Evening Atlas*, 1 July 1845.



In Rochester a ceremony was held on June 26. The orations and religious services were originally planned to take place in the Methodist church, but it soon became clear that the crowd's size necessitated moving the event to the courthouse lawn. Buffalo also held a large commemoration on July 3, with a procession that was a mile in length and the largest in that city's history. At Ithaca a large procession honored Jackson on the 28th, at which the orator declared: "Who shall attempt to pronounce the eulogy of Andrew Jackson! It is already written—already pronounced!" At Lockport in western New York a military and civic procession "unprecedented in numbers" marched in tribute. In the small town of Peekskill a sermon was delivered on the 24th. In Kinderhook, Martin Van Buren's home town, the citizens gathered on the 28th and walked solemnly as the rain drifted downward. The *Kinderhook Sentinel* commented, "The proceedings of the day were unaccompanied with that pomp and ceremony exhibited in more populous places, but they were the spontaneous effusions of grateful hearts."<sup>62</sup>

"The spontaneous effusions of grateful hearts": this is something that the Democratic presses repeated often. They also trumpeted loudly, as they had during the ceremonies' preparations, that the events were devoid of partisanship. "We are extremely gratified to be able to state that it was *no partizan demonstration*," insisted the *Morning News*. "No small proportion of those who turned out to take part in the funeral honors to the great Hero and Patriot, were of the political party who had opposed the administration of the President."<sup>63</sup> Some Whigs, however, viewed the New York City procession in a shadier, self-serving light.

The *Poughkeepsie Journal and Eagle* insisted that the parade "gave the ambitious ones a chance for display. It was pretended by the managers to be conducted free from all political influences, but we see by the

62. "Funeral Obsequies in Honor of General Jackson," *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, 26 June 1845; see a variety of articles in the *Rochester Daily Democrat* from 18–27 June 1845; "Funeral Obsequies of General Jackson," *Daily National Pilot*, 4 July 1845; "At Ithaca," *Albany Evening Argus*, 9 July 1845; "At Lockport," *Albany Evening Argus*, 9 July 1845; "Death of General Jackson," *Westchester & Putnam Republican*, 24 June 1845; "Honors to the Memory of Gen. Jackson," *Kinderhook Sentinel*, 26 June 1845; "Funeral Honors to Gen. Jackson," *ibid.*, 3 July 1845.

63. "The Funeral Solemnity of Yesterday," *New York Morning News*, 25 June 1845; see also "The Hero Gone!—Death of Gen. Andrew Jackson," *Ovid Bee*, 25 June 1845; *West Troy Advocate and Watervliet Advertiser*, 2 July 1845; "Funeral Honors to Gen. Jackson," *Kinderhook Sentinel*, 3 July 1845; "Funeral Obsequies," *Ithaca Journal*, 2 July 1845; "Death of Gen. Jackson," *Jamestown Journal*, 27 June 1845.

published programme of the arrangements that places were assigned in the procession for all the local foco associations, both of New-York and Brooklyn, as distinctive bodies, even including that gang of ruffians the Empire Club, while all whig committees and associations were excluded from it. This making a funeral occasion a political movement, however, was a step strictly worthy of the local foco Common Council and other managers in New-York, as they never can allow the name of Jackson to be associated with anything but of a party character, to recommend the acts and sustain the pretensions of worthless men.” Such harsh charges of politicking came from other quarters as well. “There is little doubt,” declared the *Goshen Democrat and Whig*, “that many of the leaders of the locofoco party have designed to make some political capital out of the lifeless remains of the ‘Old Lion.’ The imposing ceremonies with which his obsequies were attended are calculated to excite in the popular mind a high veneration for the departed hero; and consequently a sympathy with the party of which he was a leader.—But this must pass away, and the magic of the General’s name will no longer be available. His Herculean club is now broken, and political aspirants can no longer turn to him for a passport to popular favor.”<sup>64</sup>

Viewing the procession with such contempt for Democratic political maneuvering, some Whigs attempted to chip away at the supposedly solemn nature of the marchers. The *Morning Courier* stated blandly, “we certainly could discover no very deep *sensation* in the assembled thousands of which the spectacle was made up.” Another paper noted, “several persons in the procession manifested their extreme condolence by the deliberate manner in which they smoked their segars!” The *Tribune* even attacked the post-procession coverage by insisting that the *Herald’s* front-page spread of woodblock prints was hardly unique to Jackson’s procession, charging that they had been used for numerous other events including the coronation of Queen Victoria. “Now, to cap the climax,” scoffed Greeley, “they are brought out, we hope for the last time, to be palmed off as a ‘correct pictorial view of the great funeral procession of Gen. Jackson in the City of New-York.’” The *Herald*, of

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64. *Poughkeepsie Journal and Eagle*, 28 June 1845; “General Jackson,” *Goshen Democrat and Whig*, 4 July 1845.

course, blasted back, announcing that they had sold fifty to sixty thousand copies of the daily and that the *Tribune* was merely “annoyed and mortified by our superior enterprise.”<sup>65</sup>

Greeley had little patience for such Democratic ranting and shot to the heart of Jackson’s appeal as well as the difficulty for Whigs: “An idol he was made by his party, and whosoever shall refuse to fall down and worship, is menaced with a destructive tornado of ‘thoughts that breathe and words that burn.’ Now this is all vanity, silly and unmitigable nonsense.”<sup>66</sup> It may have been vanity and silly, but Democrats nevertheless held the upper hand. Death was traditionally a time when public decorum required all to join in tribute or remain silent and Democrats therefore had an opportunity to lionize Jackson and sanction all he had ever done. Though the Committee of Arrangements had excluded political emblems in order to avoid partisanship, such a decree was of little real effect other than an attempt to convince Whigs to join the ceremonies. There existed scarcely an individual who failed to understand that Jackson’s name was synonymous with the Democratic Party. To be sure, there were certainly many Democratic politicians, as well as much of the public, who, devoid of any political machinations, genuinely wanted to honor Jackson. But Whigs correctly charged that Jackson had for so long been utilized in such schemes that it was virtually impossible to separate him from the partisanship of the day. One thing was certain. Greeley was correct in assessing that anyone who failed to fall before Jackson’s memory and weep was a target for Democrats.

Though the *Herald* did acknowledge “some dissatisfaction” was expressed regarding the marshals and aides in the procession and that if charges of partisanship were true the Committee of Arrangement was “worthy of reprobation,” this was as far as any Democratic paper was willing to go.<sup>67</sup> Other editors focused more specifically on charging that some Whig organs lacked civility and decorum, and that they failed to

65. “The Funeral Ceremonies,” *Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer*, 25 June 1845; *The Schenectady Cabinet, or Freedom’s Sentinel*, 1 June 1845; “The Philosophy of Pictures,” *New York Tribune*, 27 June 1845; “Gross and Outrageous Falsehood and Libel,” *New York Herald*, 29 June 1845.

66. “Washington—The Oregon Question—The Van Nesses, Gen. Scott, Gen. Jackson, &c.,” *New York Tribune*, 25 June 1845.

67. “The Funeral Solemnities,” *New York Herald*, 24 June 1845.

appreciate the sentiments of the American people. In viewing the totality of the *Tribune's* various attacks, the *Albany Evening Atlas* concluded,

The sentiment in which the Tribune indulges, seems not to be a rash and inconsiderate outbreak of slumbering partisanship, but from their reiteration, are evidently the deliberate and settled convictions of that print, the promptings of its heart and head, its instincts and intellect, and it has not only no shame in their present avowal, but is evidently unconscious that its course is either a violation of truth, or taste, or decency, and is evidently incapable of recognizing the anomaly which its own heartlessness presents, or of estimating the policy of that decent hypocrisy which has induced some of its associates to abstain from comment where they could not commend.

The editor also noted that Greeley's commentary ". . . comes from the special partisan of Henry Clay of Kentucky" and that ". . .the dissonant notes of fierce invective, and whose funeral litany, over the grave of Jackson, is such a tirade of curses, [that it] should not be forgotten."<sup>68</sup>

The *Albany Argus* noted that though the "great mass of all parties" joined in commemorating Jackson, "a few of the more rabid partisans have vented their bitterness even while they were forced by the irresistible action of public opinion to accede to . . . manifestations of respect to his great name. The ashes of the past are carefully raked over to find something that may cast a stain on the memory of the Patriot of the Hermitage." The editor concluded in another article that "the whig papers show how slightly they estimate the discriminations of the people." Other Democratic papers expressed similar sentiments.<sup>69</sup>

The level of partisanship surrounding Jackson's death was representative of the fierce political battles that erupted during the meteoric rise of the Second American Party System. The Democratic expectation that all Americans, even Whigs, would weep at Jackson's grave belied

68. *Albany Evening Atlas*, 23 June 1845.

69. "Washington, Jackson and Livingston" *Albany Argus*, 19 July 1845; "The Character of Gen. Jackson & His Extraordinary Influence," *ibid.*, 21 June 1845; "A Kick at a Dead Lion," *Daily Advertiser*, 18 June 1845; "The Living Dog and the Dead Lion," *ibid.*, 18 June 1845. See also, "Wreck of Civil Liberty," *ibid.*, 20 June 1845; *ibid.*, 23 June 1845; "Death of General Jackson," *ibid.*, 28 June 1845.

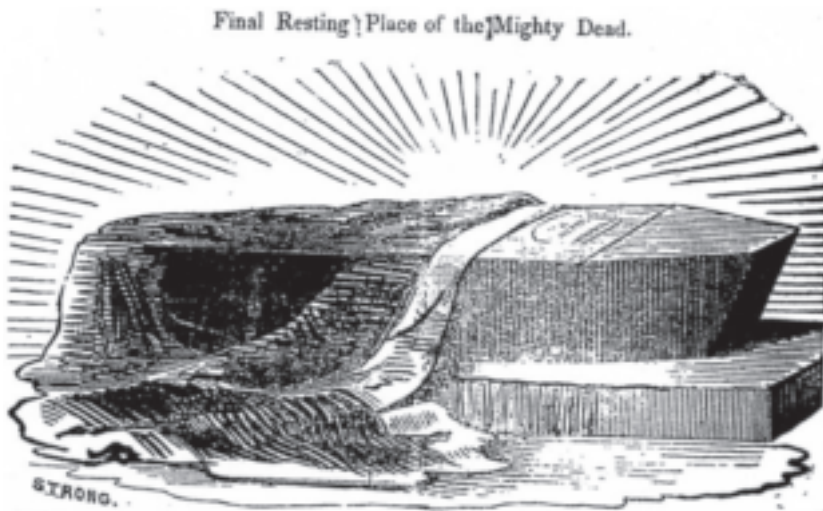
the very nature of partisan warfare during the period: a warfare that they had been instrumental in sustaining. As Horace Greeley argued, Whigs would have been guilty of serious hypocrisy had they suddenly embraced the lofty encomiums delivered by the general's supporters. Better to remark on his patriotism or say nothing. Yet some Whigs could not stomach even this. Still in full combat mode, they saw in the tributes and ceremonies to the fallen chieftain yet another attempt by the Democracy to gain some political leverage by heralding Jackson's name. To remain silent under such circumstances was to abandon the field of battle. To laud Jackson's services to the nation, even at death, undermined the party's very identity. Thus they opened up their guns once more, and Democrats subsequently lambasted their opponents for being unpatriotic, un-American, and mean-spirited.

Aside from this party maneuvering, the extent to which the people of New York honored Jackson revealed his astounding popularity. Democratic papers did go overboard in announcing the degree to which the various movements were bipartisan and at times were unreasonably surprised when some Whigs failed to fall in line, but overall the extent of community reaction to the news of Old Hickory's demise was remarkable. New York City and other localities within the state had never witnessed such extravagant outpourings of honor and respect. The funeral procession in the city on June 24 was most likely the largest in the nation's history up to that time. And lest one not fully grasp the significance of the event, consider the modern Macy's Department Store Thanksgiving Day Parade. In 2003 Macy's spent eight months planning the event in which some 12,000 people marched.<sup>70</sup> Jackson's procession almost quadrupled that number and did so in only six days. Granted times were different in the nineteenth century. There was no cable television, major sporting events, or the like, and thus the commemorations served as both social events and entertainment. Still, the communities' participation in Jackson's funeral obsequies is nevertheless striking and cannot be discounted. Ceremonies similar to that in New York City occurred throughout the nation, revealing that Andrew Jackson did indeed capture the hearts of many.

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70. Publicity Department, Macy's Department Store, 8 December 2003.

John William Ward attempted to define Jackson's meaning to the people of the nineteenth century in his seminal 1953 work, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age*. Yet Ward presented only a Democratic vision of the general at a time when party animosity was rampant. Jackson was no saint. Yet he was not a devil either, and it behooves modern historians to present a fuller, more complex treatment of a complex man. For as one newspaper put it, Jackson "was the embodiment of a grand idea—the impersonation of an era—the energy of a principle." He was a symbol for an age, though that symbol had more than one meaning. The reactions to his death in the Empire State reveal the extent to which citizens of all creeds, whether Democratic or Whig, revolved around the general's fame.



Jackson's tomb. *New York Herald*, June 25, 1845.